Landscape Guidelines Update – Public Hearing
Park and Recreation Commission
November 15, 2018
Overview

• The City of Alexandria’s Landscape Guidelines establish minimum standards for landscape plan development, installation, and maintenance as authorized in the City Code.

• The Landscape Guidelines are primarily intended for property owners, developers, and applicants seeking approval for Grading Plans, Special Use Permits, Development Site Plans, and Development Special Use Permits.
2018 Update

• The City adopted the original Landscape Guidelines in 1997 and a revision in 2007.

• The 2018 Update:
  • Clarifies City plan approval processes
  • Aligns the City’s standards with current industry standards, terminology, best practices
  • Aligns the document with City policies and plans adopted after the last update
  • Builds on lessons learned from development reviews
2018 Update Process

• RPCA created an interdepartmental team of subject matter experts in landscape architecture, horticulture, arboriculture, stormwater management, and other relevant fields

• Team members include staff from Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities, Planning and Zoning, Transportation and Environmental Services, and Department of Project Implementation

• The team conducted extensive research on other jurisdictions, industry best practices, current challenges, and local landscape issues

• The team drafted updates to the 2007 Landscape Guidelines

• The team met with industry professionals about the topics identified for changes

• The team drafted the proposed 2018 Landscape Guidelines
Major Changes

- **Document Organization**
  - Consolidated references and resources
  - Link to other plans and policies

- **Communication Sections for Development Process**
  - *New sections* describing what is required for all approval processes
  - *New sections* describing what is required for development special use permits and site plans
  - *New sections* describing what is required at different stages in the development site plan approval processes

- **Plant Material Requirements**
  - *New requirement* to source plant material from within 300 miles of Alexandria
  - Prohibition on wild sourced plants

- **Invasive Species Management**
  - *New requirement* for invasive species removal and management if certain project criteria are met
Major Changes

• Canopy Coverage
  • **New requirement** to meet canopy coverage requirements on site or contribute to the Urban Forestry Fund
  • Amendments to planting above structure requirements to encourage additional trees on each site
  • Amendments to street tree requirements to encourage additional trees in the right-of-way

• Native Plants
  • **New requirement** for native plants on landscape plans
  • Required percentage would increase over time, to coordinate with industry availability

• Plant Diversity
  • **New requirement** to increase diversity of plant species proposed on landscape plans
Major Changes

• Soils
  • **New requirements** for soil composition
  • **Amended requirements** for soil volume
  • **Amended requirements** for plantings over structure

• Planting and Tree Protection Details
  • **Amended details** for planting standards
  • **New details** added to standardize installation of all plant types, and standardize tree protection measures
  • Linked to the website for improved updating

• References and Appendices
  • **Updated references** to required notes, canopy coverage allowances, and industry standards for native plants and invasive species
  • **Updated references** to related City documents
  • Linked to the website for improved updating
Comments Received To Date

• Terminology Clarifications
• Tree Planting Specifications
• Native Plants
• Text Clarifications and Formatting
• Additional Document References
• Appendices Content
• Cultural Landscapes Text
Outreach Process

- Listening Sessions with Industry Professionals and Designers – Summer 2018
- NAIOP – October 17
- Park and Recreation Commission Draft Presentation – October 18
- Online Public Comment Period – October 19 - November 16
- Environmental Policy Commission – November 5
- Beautification Commission – November 8
- NAIOP – November 13
- **Park and Recreation Commission Public Hearing – November 15**
- Outreach to Federation of Civic Associations
- Planning Commission – Early 2019
- City Council – Early 2019
Next Steps

• Address Comments Received

• Complete Staff Report

• Presentation to Planning Commission and City Council in early 2019

• Coordinate Text Amendments in Spring 2019
Comments
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